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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 001156

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: IBRAHIMOGLU LEADS 70 PERSON PROTEST AT ISRAELI
EMBASSY

REF: BAKU 1131

Classified By: Acting DCM Joan Polaschik for Reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (C) Former Juma Mosque Imam Ilgar Ibrahimoglu led a group of roughly 70 - 80 in an August 3 nonviolent protest of Israeli actions in the Middle East in front of the Israeli Embassy. Ibrahimoglu told Emboff that police officers arrived late and largely permitted the group to demonstrate without interference. At its conclusion, police detained three of the demonstrators and released them later in the day with a warning. Separately, on August 2, ten Ibrahimoglu followers demonstrated in front of the UN offices in Baku to protest perceived UN inaction in the Middle East. (Ibrahimoglu's August 3 protest in front of the Israeli Embassy, while still relatively small, was considerably larger than those he has organized previously. It was also the first protest he led personally concerning events in the Middle East. Ibrahimoglu has given us no indication to date of whether he plans to protest again in front of our Embassy.)

12. (U) Separately, on August 4 at roughly 1600, approximately 60 - 70 people held a protest in the village of Nardaran in connection with the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. According to OSCE Deputy Head of Mission (DHM), Robin Seaward, OSCE staff who witnessed the event said that demonstrators shouted anti-Israeli and anti-American slogans, with one person condemning the Azerbaijani government for being anti-Islam. (Nardaran, a village roughly 25 kilometers north of Baku is known for its conservative Muslim identity, close knit community and independent-minded streak. Nardaran villagers were among the only Azerbaijani citizens to protest the Danish publication of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed.) OSCE DHM reports that Nardaran residents plan to hold another protest next week if a cease-fire has not been reached in the Middle East.

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